DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 472 434 CE 084 374

TITLE	Nebraska Career and Technical Education Consolidated Annual Report, 2000-2001. Executive Summary.
INSTITUTION	Nebraska State Dept. of Education, Lincoln.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	13p.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: http://www.nde.state.ne.us/CTE/CARreports/2001_annual_performance _report.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Education; *Accountability; Adult Education; Community Colleges; Data Collection; Educational Quality; Federal Legislation; *Integrated Curriculum; Leadership; Nontraditional Students; Postsecondary Education; Program Administration; Program Evaluation; *Program Improvement; Secondary Education; State Aid; State Programs; State Standards; *Tech Prep; Technical Assistance; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Career and Technical Education; Carl D Perkins Vocational Technical Educ Act 1998; Crosswalks (Linking); *Nebraska

ABSTRACT

Career and technical education (CTE) in Nebraska prepares individuals at the secondary, postsecondary, and adult level for entry, advanced, technical, and managerial positions in business and industry. The Department of Education is the designated agency for administration of CTE and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. To promote continuous quality improvement and meet state-adjusted performance levels, Nebraska is implementing an accountability system, a component of the overall STARS (School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System). State leadership funds have been allocated to provide programs, services, and activities that prepare individuals for nontraditional training and employment; provide services to individuals in state institutions; and support CTE student organizations. To STARS, CTE has developed an alignment tool called Links-to-LEARNS (Leading Educational Achievement through Rigorous Nebraska Standards), a crosswalk of the discipline program curriculum frameworks with state academic standards. The mission of Tech Prep programs is to prepare individuals to succeed in a dynamic and technological world. Six community college areas serve as Tech Prep consortium administrative agents. For the secondary and postsecondary level for all core indicators, CTE is continuing to provide technical assistance workshops that deal with data quality and consistency in reporting and to refine Links-to-LEARNS. (YLB)

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ED 472 434

Nebraska Career and Technical Education
Consolidated Annual Report
2000-2001

Executive Summary

Career and Technical Education programs in Nebraska prepare individuals at the secondary, postsecondary and adult education level for entry, advanced, technical, and managerial positions in business and industry. Programs of secondary career and technical education include: agriculture education, business education, career guidance, diversified occupations, family and consumer sciences education, health occupations, industrial technology education, marketing education, tech-prep, and trade and industrial education. Each program offers a sequence of courses that are competency-based and uses applied learning that contributes to the academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills, technical skills, and occupation-specific skills of an individual.

Programs of postsecondary career and technical education include Community College opportunities in agriculture occupations, automotive and diesel occupations, business and office occupations, communications technology, construction occupations, electronic/electrical occupations, health occupations, manufacturing fabrications occupations, service occupations, and transportation occupations. Career and Technical education also enhances the quality of life of Nebraska citizens by teaching students how to balance work and family.

I. Program Administration

a. Report on State Administration

The Nebraska Department of Education is the designated Nebraska agency for the administration of career and technical education and the Carl.D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. The Nebraska Board of Education also serves as the State Board of Vocational Education. The Board, in cooperation with the Commissioner of Education and the Department of Education Career and Technical Education staff work as partners to help all Nebraska students become productive citizens.

Career and Technical Education in Nebraska is delivered through high quality programs at the secondary and community college levels that integrate academic and career and technical education; promote student achievement of challenging academic and career/technical standards; provide students with strong experience in, and understanding of all aspects of an industry; address the needs of individuals who are members of special populations; involve parents and employers; and provide strong linkages between secondary and postsecondary education. These programs assist all enrolled students to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to meet challenging State academic standards and industry-recognized skills, and to prepare for postsecondary education, further learning, and a wide range of career opportunities.

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To promote continuous quality improvement, and meet the state-adjusted levels of performance, Nebraska is implementing an accountability system in response to this legislation. This system in Nebraska is actually a component of the overall STARS (School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System) in Nebraska. Under this system, the Secretary of Education and each State agree on annual levels of performance for the "core indicators" specified in the law:

- Student attainment of challenging State-established academic standards and career/technical education skill proficiencies.
- Student attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, a proficiency credential in conjunction with a secondary school diploma, or postsecondary degree or credential.
- Placement in, retention, and completion of, postsecondary education or advanced training, placement in military service, or placement or retention in employment.
- Student participation in, and completion of, career and technical education programs that lead to nontraditional training and employment.

These performance levels become part of the State Plan for Career and Technical Education in Nebraska and are used to assess and monitor the performance of local eligible recipients.

Activities:

1. Nebraska participated in multiple national projects to assist with the design of the Data Quality Initiative for OVAE. This consisted of workgroups focused on accountability, reporting, incentives and sanctions, and nontraditional training. This national participation was transitioned to designing the accountability system for Nebraska.

   Nebraska also participated as a pilot state for the electronic version of the Comprehensive Annual Report (CAR).

2. With regard to technical/occupational skill attainment, Nebraska has participated in all five of the Building Linkages projects except for Health. Nebraska conducted a national pilot site for the Manufacturing Linkages project, and the Information Technology career cluster project. We are also participating in the career cluster consortiums for Transportation, Distribution and Logistics, and Arts and Communication being managed by V-TECS. Nebraska is also engaged with the Agriculture and Construction projects and is monitoring the other projects in progress. These projects have assisted with the alignment of academic and skill standards with assessment, curriculum, and student achievement of Career and Technical Education students.

3. At the local level, Nebraska held a series of regional meetings to provide technical assistance on the accountability system for schools, consortiums, and Community Colleges; including Nontraditional projects and Tech Prep.

4. Continued a multi-faceted monitoring process focusing on the core indicators, levels of performance, and statements of assurances in the State Plan. Tech Prep monitoring has evolved into a "program improvement process" using quality indicators related to the focus group report: "*Tech Prep: Building a Framework for Future Research, Evaluation, and Program Practice.*" Started the process of enhancing the same "program improvement process" for all LEA's as a part of the monitoring process.

5. At the postsecondary level, Nebraska is continuing an effort to align program courses and the numbering system statewide among all public Community Colleges. From this, a consistent process of program delivery, student assessment and competency development will result.

6. Nebraska is one of eight states participating in an Integrated Performance and Benchmarking System. The system will share a set of core data and performance indicators, an electronic harvesting system, and a program database resource shared between USOE and the states.

7. Nebraska continued the development and inservice of the LINKS to LEARNS project, a crosswalking effort to link career and technical education standards to state core academic standards.

b. Report on State Leadership

1. Required Activities

Nontraditional

State Leadership funds were allocated to provide programs, services, and activities that prepare individuals for nontraditional training and employment, including careers in computer science, technology, and other high skill, high wage occupations.

Services provided included the following.

1. Recruitment, guidance and retention activities for males and females in nontraditional occupations.
2. Linkage activities with business and industry to identify nontraditional role models and/or to develop strategies to enhance recruitment, placement and retention of nontraditional students and employees.
3. Assistance to counselors and career and technical educators to eliminate gender bias and stereotyping in career guidance and counseling activities, and to integrate equity concepts into career and technical education programs.
4. Development of leadership skills for individuals who are participating in nontraditional career areas.
5. Professional development and technical assistance for developing and institutionalizing services.

Sixteen special projects utilizing approximately $92,000 were funded.

Programs in State Institutions

State Leadership funds were allocated to provide services to individuals in State institutions. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Protection and Safety Division were awarded these funds.

Services provided include the following.

1. Career Guidance and Counseling.
2. Coordination with other agencies and groups to provide a non-duplicative sequence of services.
3. Career and Technical training programs to prepare individuals for employment.

Expenditures for this program area were $45,000.

Curriculum Development

In support of the Nebraska STARS, Career and Technical Education has developed an alignment tool called **Links-to-LEARNS (Leading Educational Achievement through Rigorous Nebraska Standards)** which is a crosswalk of the discipline program curriculum frameworks with the State academic standards. Secondary Career and Technical Education instructors are using this "tool" to demonstrate that academic standards can be taught and competently assessed through both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments outside the four core areas of math, science, reading/writing/listening, and social studies/history. All Career and Technical Education disciplines with the exception of Health Occupations are completed and forwarded to all Nebraska secondary and middle schools.

In the area of standards, assessment and accountability, Career and Technical Education will cooperatively participate in common or consistent approaches of performance assessment to reduce burden on school districts and community colleges that receive federal funding from multiple sources. This will allow for greater consistency and commonality in performance measurement and will make data and reporting more understandable and useful to parents, students, and policy-makers.

Professional Development

Several discipline areas conducted statewide professional development activities to implement Links to LEARNS.

The annual INVEST conference (a state wide professional development conference) was held. All career and Technical Education instructional discipline areas participated in this conference. Over 500 Career and Technical Education educators participated.

Services to Special Populations

Individuals included in this section include individuals with disabilities; individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including foster children; single parents, including single pregnant women; displaced homemakers; and individuals with other barriers to educational achievement, including individuals with limited English proficiency.

Members of special populations were provided with equal access to the full range of career and technical education programs including cooperative education, apprenticeship programs, comprehensive career guidance and counseling services, and were not discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations.

The support services provided included the following.

1. Career counseling and assessment.
2. Basic skill remediation and tutorial assistance.
3. Employment exploration, planning, and preparation.
4. Integration of academic competencies into career and technical education.
5. Program modification as appropriate for various disabilities.

2. Permissive Activities

State Leadership funds were utilized to support six Career and Technical Education Student Organizations. Major activities included:

1. Sponsor leadership development conferences for all student organizations including skill development competitive events.
2. Financial accounting services for all student organizations.
3. State staff leadership for each student organization.

State Leadership funds were utilized to support the Nebraska Career Information System (NCIS). This system provides career search and exploration information to students throughout Nebraska. NCIS supplements and enhances Nebraska's Career Resources Network State Grant.

3. Core Indicator Related Activity

Activity

A series of regional workshops were held to provide technical assistance on the implementation of the standards and measures and on reporting accurate information. These workshops also included information about developing program strategies that would improve student achievement.

Outcome

Based on technical assistance provided, the data submitted for the standards and measures was more accurate. We plan to continue technical assistance for eligible recipients to continue to improve the accuracy and completeness of the data.

Budget – See Financial Report

c. Implications for Next Fiscal Year

Nebraska intends to continue the specific services and initiatives that are identified in the State Plan. These services and initiatives support the enhancement of student achievement in both academic and occupational skill attainment. Funding preference will be given to those activities that support the attainment of the negotiated levels of performance.

Through a series of focus groups, we plan to evaluate the process of application, reporting, monitoring and fiscal management. This should help us improve the processes we use in administering Perkins and help meet locals needs.

II. Program Performance

Performance Accountability – Core Indicators [Section 113]

An Accountability and Evaluation Task Force was selected for the expertise and information they could bring to the discussion. The task force included individuals representing: secondary administration, secondary teachers, Educational Service Units, postsecondary administrators, postsecondary instructors, the Nebraska Community College Association and the Nebraska Postsecondary Coordinating Commission. Draft copies of the Nebraska Core Indicator Framework along with the data that had been collected were given to this task force.

The result of committee discussion was the final core indicator framework including the projected levels of performance that were reasonable to be achieved. This committee also made suggestions about the content of the technical assistance meeting that were held.

Special Populations – [Section 122 © (7), (8), (13), (17), (18)]

Eligible recipients were required to provide the following services to Special Populations.

- Activities that overcome the barriers that contribute to lowered rates of access or success in programs for each of the special populations.
- Design services and activities to enable the special populations to meet the core indicators of performance.
- Documentation that special populations were not discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations.
- Provide opportunities for nontraditional training and employment.
- Provide Services that address gender bias.

All of the data reported on the core indicators is disaggregated by each category of special population so their progress toward meeting the levels of performance can be tracked.

Tech-Prep [Sections 204c and 205]

The mission of Tech-Prep programs in Nebraska is to prepare individuals to succeed in a dynamic and technological world.

The Vision is to assist secondary and postsecondary schools in providing integrated, articulated curriculum offerings based on student interest, aptitudes, career choices, and labor market demand.

Nebraska has six community college areas that serve as Tech-Prep consortium administrative agents. Each consortium has a regional Tech-Prep coordinator who works with the local educational agencies in each respective area. This has proven to be a very effective method of administering the program.

During the last fiscal year, 2,591 vocational concentrators and over 29,510 secondary students from 153 high schools and 1,029 postsecondary students participated in the program.

Major Accomplishments are as follows

Business/Industry Involvement:

- Sent business representatives to the Employer-to-Employer conference.
- Teacher/business summer internship programs.
- Increased representation on the Advisory Committee from various segments of the community including unions.
- Work Keys testing provided to industry.
- Many schools participated in area career fairs sponsored by business representatives.

Curriculum Development:

- Applied academics curriculum integrated into course sequences in consortium schools.
- Supported PICES, which is a program to help secondary students transition successfully to postsecondary education.
- Schools attended guidance workshops to develop a Guidance and Career Plan.

In-service Activities:

- Supported workshops, conferences attended by consortium members such as INVEST and National Tech-Prep Network.
- Secondary and postsecondary faculty participated in summer internship programs.

Marketing Activities:

- Continued improvement of the Tech-Prep Web Site.
- Distributed Tech-Prep brochures.
- Published and distributed a Tech-Prep consortium newsletter.

Serving Special Populations:

- Consortium articulation agreements provide for equal opportunity and access to all students, including special populations students, ensuring the right to participate in all Tech-Prep activities.
- A Career Prep Handbook was inserviced during the year promoted inclusion of special populations within the Tech-Prep program.
- Provided in-service opportunities for educators working with special populations.
- Consortium schools use individualized learning plans for all students.
- Students with special need are provided the specialized services necessary to allow them to participate in the Tech-Prep program.

Fiscal Requirements [Section 122©(10) and (11); and 122© (4) (A) and (B)

The State complied with the requirements of Title I and the provision in the State Plan, including a financial audit of funds received under this Act which may be included as part of an audit of other federal or state programs.

No funds under Title I were expended to acquire equipment (including computer software) in any instance in which such acquisition resulted in a direct financial benefit to any organization representing the interests of the purchasing entity, the employees of the purchasing entity, or any affiliate of such organization.

Nebraska distributes funds to Secondary and Postsecondary career and technical education eligible recipients using the following split.

Secondary	60%
Postsecondary	40%

The rational for the secondary/postsecondary allocation is (1) there are greater State resources appropriated for career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level, and (2) secondary programs serve a greater number of students.

Local education agencies that did not receive an allocation of $15,000 or greater entered into a consortium of other local education agencies. Twenty-five local education agencies received allocations of $15,000 or greater. The remaining 258 local education agencies formed consortiums.

Eligible postsecondary institutions that did not receive an allocation of $50,000 or greater entered into a consortium of other eligible institutions. Six eligible institutions received allocations greater than $50.000. The remaining eligible institution formed a consortium with one of the six.

A. State Performance Summary

b. Definitions of Vocational Concentrator and Tech-Prep Student

Program Concentrator shall be: (a) a secondary student enrolled in a sequence of three or more career and technical courses (or all of the courses offered in an area) which lead to entry level occupations, apprenticeship, military, or post high school training; (b) a postsecondary student enrolled in a career and technical program leading to a certificate and/or associate degree.

Tech-Prep Student shall be (a) a secondary student who is enrolled in one or more approved career and technical courses that are delineated in a Tech-Prep Articulation agreement: (b) a postsecondary student who was enrolled in one or more approved career and technical courses that were delineated in a tech-prep articulation agreement at the secondary and who are continuing their technical preparation at the postsecondary level.

c. Measurement Approaches and Data Quality Improvement

Secondary

Core Indicator	Measurement Approach	Method and Years for Estimating Baseline
1S1	Standardized achievement tests or locally developed criterion referenced tests or a grade of B or higher or a combination of these.	The students concentrating in vocational education meet the State academic standards. Most recent year (2000-2001)
1S2	Locally developed assessments or criterion referenced tests or a grade of B or higher or other assessment instruments such as ASVAB or a combination of these.	Performance level of students concentrating in vocational education. Most recent year (2000-2001)
2S1	Local school graduation data and Adult Ed. GED data.	Vocational education program concentrators received a high school diploma. Most recent year (2000-2001)
3S1	Locally collected student follow-up data.	Vocational program concentrators were placed with in one year of graduation. Most recent year(2000-2001)
3S2	**Not Required**	
4S1	Enrollment data from programs that are locally determined as nontraditional. Data is reported at the program level.	The nontraditional program participation rate. Most recent year (2000-2001)
4S2	Enrollment and completion data from programs that are locally determined as nontraditional. Data is reported at the program level.	The nontraditional completion rate. Most recent year (2000-2001)

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Postsecondary

Core Indicator	Measurement Approach	Method and Years for Estimating Baseline
1P1	Locally developed assessments or criterion referenced tests or have a Grade point Average in required academic courses of a B or higher.	Students who have concentrated in a program leading to a certificate or associate degree met the program defined academic standards. Most recent year (2000-2001)
1P2	Locally developed assessments or criterion referenced tests, or industry assessment and Credentialing tests, or National/State licensing tests or a combination of these.	Students who have concentrated in a program leading to a certificate or associate degree met the program defined and industry validated vocational-technical skills. Most recent year (2000-2001)
2P1	Course completion data. Degree, certificate completion data.	The program completion rate. Most recent year (2000-2001)
3P1	Locally collected student follow-up data. State Unemployment Insurance records associated with Social Security Numbers (if available).	Program completers were placed within one year of graduation. Most recent year (2000-2001)
3P2	Locally collected student follow-up data. State Unemployment Insurance records associated with Social Security Number (if available)	Those placed were retained in employment *This is based upon a follow-up of the 1998-99 students who were placed for employment. Most recent year (2000-2001)
4P1	Enrollment data from programs that are locally determined as nontraditional. Data is reported at the program level.	The nontraditional program participation rate. Most recent year (2000-2001)
4P2	Enrollment and completion data from programs that are locally determined as nontraditional. Data is reported at the program level.	The nontraditional completion rate. Most recent year (2000-2001)

The Technical Assistance meetings referenced under Leadership activities were directed toward the improvement of data as well as programs.

State staff works closely with local eligible recipients to ensure that the expectations and requirements of the Act are met. In the local application, local programs must describe how they will utilize funds to improve local programs. The local application must also describe the projected outcomes for programs and students will contribute to meeting the projected levels of performance.

d. Effectiveness of Improvement Strategies in Previous Program Year

In support of the Nebraska STARS, Career and Technical Education has developed an alignment tool called Links-to-LEARNS (Leading Educational Achievement through Rigorous Nebraska Standards) which is a crosswalk of the discipline program curriculum frameworks with the State academic standards. Secondary Career and Technical Education instructors are using this "tool" to demonstrate that academic standards can be taught and competently assessed through both norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessments outside the four core areas of math, science, reading/writing/listening, and social studies/history.

Implemented a multi-faceted monitoring process focusing on the core indicators, levels of performance, and statements of assurances in the State Plan. Tech Prep monitoring has evolved into a "program improvement process" using quality indicators related to the focus group report: "*Tech Prep: Building a Framework for Future Research, Evaluation, and Program Practice.*"

In this era of standards, assessment and accountability, Career and Technical Education participates in common or consistent approaches of performance assessment to reduce burden on school districts and community colleges that receive federal funding from multiple sources. This will allow for greater consistency and commonality in performance measurement and will make data and reporting more understandable and useful to parents, students, and policy-makers.

All expenditures are based upon improving programs. The local applications must describe how the use of funds will assist in achieving the core indicators of performance.

In their Annual Reports, eligible recipients must describe

- The goals, objectives, and activities completed for each of the uses of funds in the Local Plan and describe outcomes in measurable terms.
- Any problems or major changes that occurred during implementation of the Local Plan.
- How all of the goals, objectives, and activities completed addressed diversity and equity issues, contributed to coordination of programs, and met the needs of students who are members of special populations.
- How the program was evaluated.
- What could have been or should be done to improve the program. What changes will be made in the following year's activities.

e. Improvement strategies for the next program year.

Secondary

For all core indicators, we are going to continue providing technical assistance workshops that deal with data quality and consistency in reporting. We are also refine Links-to-LEARNS for the discipline programs in order to improve Career and Technical Education's contribution to the improvement of academic achievement.

We are working with the Department's Management Information Section in an attempt to incorporate as much as we can of what we need to know for career and technical education into the overall statewide data system.

For the core indicators dealing with Nontraditional participation and completion, we are considering adjusting our definitions so that we are able to get more consistent and accurate data.

We will begin adding technical assistance to eligible recipients based on their performance on the core indicators this year. These will be incorporated into data retreats currently being planned by schools to evaluate student performance.

Postsecondary

For all core indicators, we are going to continue providing technical assistance workshops that deal with data quality and consistency in reporting.

We are also working with the Postsecondary Coordinating Commission in an attempt to consolidate our data requirements with the data they already collect. This should eliminate duplication of reporting, lessen the data burden, and improve on the accuracy of our reports.

For those core indicators dealing with Nontraditional participation and completion, we are developing a cross walk of nontraditional occupations and the programs and courses offered. This will improve our ability to identify those who are in nontraditional programs.

We plan to provide technical assistance to postsecondary institutions on their performance data and develop plans for improvement of core indicators needing attention.

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